



Adolescents and Youth Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (AYSRRH)

Project in Myanmar

Name:

AYSRRH project

Location:

Magway Region, Southern Shan State and Kayin State in Myanmar

Funded by:

UNFPA HER project

Dates:

2020-2022.

Background

In Myanmar, approximately 1.4 million adolescent girls are married, and approximately 600,000 have begun childbearing. Girls have a limited understanding of reproductive health due to cultural sensitivity, inadequate teacher training, and limited family and community support. SRH is still considered taboo in many communities, so boys and girls lack accurate information about their SRH and rights. The Myanmar youth SRHR project aims to **increase youth activism** and enable youth, including people with disabilities, to **realise their sexual and reproductive health rights and gain freedom from gender-based violence (GBV)**. The project aims to empower women and youth to lead advocacy and behaviour change campaigns on SRHR and GBV through organising state and national youth platforms and supporting the platforms to advocate for behaviour change concerning SRHR/GBV.

The project is funded by the **UNFPA's HER project** and is being implemented in Magway Region, Southern Shan State and Kayin State in Myanmar. The project's primary actors are youth ambassadors and peers in the community aged 15-35 years including young people with disabilities. VSO Myanmar is implementing this project in partnership with MSI Reproductive Choices and Myanmar Medical Association.

Objectives

The primary project objective is adolescent and young people including young people with disability realize their Sexual and Reproductive Rights (SRHR) and are free from Gender-based violence (GBV).

Key approaches

The project intervention is hinged on improving SRHR knowledge among young people through the volunteer for development (V4D) model where young people (15-35 years) from the community are mentored and trained to become Youth Ambassadors. Youth Ambassadors are active volunteers in the communities trained on **SRHR and Comprehensive Sexuality Education**. Youth Ambassadors are responsible for forming peer groups within their communities. Each Youth Ambassador has several groups of 5 individuals each, with whom they meet with once a week to share experiences and discuss SRHR issues. Peer groups are innovative learning and sharing platforms that enable young people to understand and respond to issues



Adolescent girls and young women in a peer group session.

regarding SRHR. Besides facilitating the peer group sessions, Youth Ambassadors can offer counselling and make referrals for further case management. Through the partnership with MSI Reproductive Choices young people are referred for services. Peer groups have also created WhatsApp groups for further interaction.

Key results

Despite the uncertainties resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and economic and political instability, the AYSRHR project has made significant advances in improving young people's SRHR.

Adolescents and Youth are able to demand for their (SMNRCAR) health rights:

1. A total of **60 Youth Ambassadors** were trained to deliver SRHR awareness sessions for peer groups.
2. **240 Peer-to-Peer Groups** were established at community level to support 1,200 young people.
3. A **regional youth platform** has been established, and has facilitated information sharing, referrals, and coordination of development programmes in the country.
4. A **National Facebook Platform** was established to improve SRHR information dissemination among

young people. In the last quarter (January -March), 1,700 were reached and 35 posts were shared to raise awareness on SRHR and GBV.

Future plans and continuity

The economic and political turmoil of 2021, combined with the devastating impact of the pandemic has driven almost half the population (25 million people) into poverty, wiping out gains made since 2005. The COVID-19 outbreak and political and economic instability in Myanmar has impacted the implementation of the Adolescents and Youth Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (AYSRHR) Project. VSO Myanmar has made many adjustments to ensure project continuity, and this include delivering training in a semi-virtual approach due to movement restrictions and issuing identity cards and organization registry for volunteers to use when they get to check-points. The project was scheduled to begin in 2020 but due to the COVID-19 outbreak and the political crisis in Myanmar, project implementation began in 2022, running from January to June 2022. The project implementation period is renewed every 6 months taking into consideration the country's political context.